

of detail is certainly adequate for the intended audience of non-specialists.

The book describes recent advances in diagnostic radiology which are improving discrimination in difficult cases and advancing understanding of the disease. Each of the different groups of medical therapies is appointed a chapter. What seemed (to this medical SHO) a mildly bewildering array of pharmaceuticals for the treatment of this disease is reduced to four groups with clear indications and remarkably uncomplicated pharmacology. In the spirit of Evidence Based Medicine, the author often provides brief descriptions and analyses of trials and illustrates these with graphs and confidence intervals. The reader is therefore acquainted with some of the controversies and background knowledge to confidently interpret the new NICE guidelines for the diagnosis and management of Parkinson's Disease. The final chapter concerns these new guidelines, and this book is harmonious with the recommendations. Parkinson's Disease in Practice is an accessible, authoritative introduction to the current knowledge in this debilitating illness which should be of interest to any doctor working on medical wards.

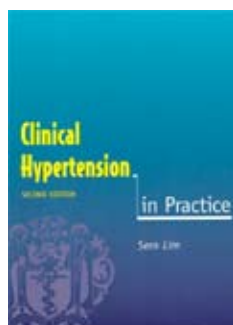
Declan Bradley

**Clinical Hypertension in Practice (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).** Sern Lim. Royal Society of Medicine Press, London, September 2006. Paperback, 114pp. £18.95. ISBN 978-1-85315-659-5.

The invisible health hazard of hypertension is the focus of this short volume. It aims to be accessible to GPs, hospital doctors, students and nurses and is intended to be a summary of the current best practice, evidence and guidelines. The opening chapters describing the current understanding of the mechanisms of hypertension provide a background necessary to understanding the basis for treating hypertension. Where the book shines, though, is in the subject of clinical assessment. There is practical guidance for initial and further investigations, with comprehensive information about the interpretation of results and steering towards certain differential diagnoses. This, above all, makes this book a valuable resource for anyone treating hypertension.

With recent changes to the NICE guidelines for the treatment of Hypertension and so many trials of the newer pharmaceutical therapies, the long treatment chapter might warrant division into separate chapters for each class of drug in a future edition. Amidst the many drug trials, the lifestyle changes which lower blood pressure are not lost. The reader can confidently inform patients of the benefit of these non-pharmacological interventions.

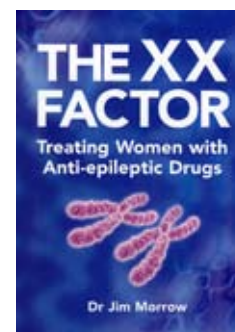
The author offers further guidance in treating hypertension in the elderly, in those taking other medications and in pregnancy as well as giving clear guidance for the treatment of hypertensive emergencies. Clinical Hypertension in Practice



provides a welcome refresher and update. Of its intended audience, junior medical staff and General Practitioners might find it most useful.

Declan Bradley

**The XX Factor. Treating Women with Anti-epileptic Drugs.** Jim Morrow. National Services for Health Improvement, Dartford, Kent, 2007. 80pp. £5.99. ISBN 978-0-9554803-2-4



There is increasing awareness and knowledge as to the risks of anti-epileptic drugs, particularly when used in pregnancy. Yet managing the care of women with epilepsy is even more complicated and difficult. Retrospective pregnancy registers are providing more reliable information regarding teratogenicity but it takes time to acquire information for many of the newer anti-epileptic drugs. Retrospective and small prospective studies continue to raise concerns regarding developmental outcome. Sodium valproate is of particular concern in both regards, but it remains one of the most effective treatments for specific epilepsies. Finally, increasing numbers of women are treated with anti-epileptic drugs for conditions other than epilepsy such as bipolar effective disorders, migraine, and chronic pain.

This small book with its eye-catching title attempts to address the evidence that is currently available in a no-nonsense, easy-to-read format. Although it recognises the lack of information for women taking anti-epileptic drugs for medical conditions other than epilepsy, the focus is on women with epilepsy. The book is divided into 10 chapters. The first 2 cover general issues of diagnosis and of the anti-epileptic drugs themselves. The remaining chapters are women specific, covering adolescence, fertility and sexuality, contraception, pregnancy, motherhood, and the menopause. The format is clear and easy to read with useful key points at the end of each chapter.

A wide range of health professionals should find this book helpful, including General Practitioners, Neurologists who see patients with epilepsy but would not consider themselves Epileptologists, Specialist Epilepsy Nurses, Practice Nurses, and Midwives. Psychiatrists and those who work in headache and pain clinics should also read this book if only to alert themselves to the uncertain risks they are exposing their patients to when prescribing anti-epileptic drugs.

This book does not of course provide all the answers but it does comprehensively go through the issues and meets its promise to present the evidence currently available. For those who need more detail, it directs the reader to a comprehensive list of over ninety references. This is a helpful book for those who need a quick update on this important area.

Aline Russell (Glasgow)